

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 19880 01 OF 02 281052Z  
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AGRE-00  
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TRSE-00 PRS-01 SP-02 SOE-02 OMB-01 DOE-11 DOEE-00  
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O R 280950Z DEC 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3913  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 19880

BRUSSELS FOR USEC

GENEVA FOR USMTN

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, ETRD, EPAP, JA, US  
SUBJECT: POLITICAL IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS ON THE  
RULING CONSERVATIVES

SUMMARY: IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS ON JAPANESE  
POLITICAL SCENE IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO SORT OUT. ALTHOUGH  
SOME 850,000 HOUSEHOLDS REPORTEDLY ENGAGE IN BEEF OR MANDARIN  
ORANGE (MIKAN) PRODUCTION, OVERLAP EXISTS AND VAST MAJORITY  
OF FARMS ARE DIVERSIFIED, E.G., WITH ONLY ONE OR TWO BEEF  
CATTLE. PRODUCERS' POLITICAL INFLUENCE IS IMPRESSIVE, HOW-  
EVER. ALMOST 350 LDP DIET MEMBERS (AGAIN WITH SOME OVERLAP)  
BELONG TO GROUPS SPECIFICALLY REPRESENTING BEEF OR CITRUS  
INTERESTS; PRODUCERS HAVE SUPPORT OF POWERFUL FEDERATION OF  
AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES; AND, RURAL INTERESTS, GENERALLY,  
ARE BOTH OVERREPRESENTED AND EXCEPTIONALLY INFLUENTIAL IN DIET.  
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 19880 01 OF 02 281052Z

NO ONE CAN SAY FOR SURE WHETHER LDP WOULD LOSE ITS  
SLENDER DIET MAJORITIES -- FOUR SEATS IN LOWER HOUSE AND  
ONE IN UPPER -- DUE TO AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS. MANY  
CONSERVATIVES BELIEVE THEY COULD, HOWEVER, AND PERCEPTIONS  
MAY COUNT MORE THAN REALITY. WITH STRONG POSSIBILITY OF  
ELECTION IN 1978, FEW ARE INCLINED TO TAKE CHANCES. END  
SUMMARY.

1. IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO SORT OUT DISCRETELY POTENTIAL IMPACT OF LIBERALIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS ON JAPANESE POLITICAL SCENE. ON SURFACE, PROTECTIONISTS MAKE GOOD CASE, ALTHOUGH BOTH THEIR STATISTICS AND POLITICAL FORECASTS ARE OPEN TO QUESTION. IN REGARD TO STATISTICS: DESPITE JAPAN'S INDUSTRIAL IMAGE, OF 31.4 MILLION JAPANESE HOUSEHOLDS, FULLY 15.6 PER CENT (NEARLY THREE TIMES US PROPORTION) ARE STILL ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE. NEARLY HALF A MILLION HOUSEHOLDS RAISE BEEF CATTLE (WITH AN AVERAGE OF 4.3 HEAD EACH) AND NEARLY 350,000 HOUSEHOLDS RAISE MIKANS (MANDARIN ORANGES). TOGETHER (ALTHOUGH THERE IS ADMITTEDLY SOME OVERLAP) BEEF AND MIKAN PRODUCERS ACCOUNT FOR APPROXIMATELY 17 PERCENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE AND 3 PERCENT OF ALL JAPANESE HOUSEHOLDS. THIS SAID, VAST MAJORITY OF FARMS ARE DIVERSIFIED, E.G., MOST BEEF "PRODUCERS" HAVE ONLY ONE OR TWO HEAD OF CATTLE, AND TO SOME EXTENT SIMILAR SITUATION HOLDS FOR MIKAN "GROWERS".

2. PUNCHING HOLES IN PROTECTIONIST STATISTICS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT DENY IMPRESSIVE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF BEEF/MIKAN LOBBY, PARTICULARLY ON RULING CONSERVATIVE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (LDP). REASONS FOR THIS INFLUENCE ARE NOT HARD TO FIND. BEEF IS PRODUCED IN ALMOST EVERY PREFECTURE. ALBEIT IN SMALL QUANTITIES. THERE ARE MORE THAN 1,000 HEAD

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 19880 01 OF 02 281052Z

OF BEEF CATTLE IN ALL BUT NINE OF JAPAN'S 47 PREFECTURES WITH BULK IN CONSERVATIVE STRONGHOLDS OF KYUSHU AND JAPAN'S NORTHEAST (TOHOKU). NEARLY 140 LDP DIET MEMBERS BELIEVE IT IS SUFFICIENTLY IN THEIR POLITICAL INTEREST TO JOIN HIGHLY VOCAL DIET MEMBERS LIVESTOCK PROMOTION LEAGUE.

3. MANDARIN ORANGE (MIKAN) PRODUCTION IS MORE CONCENTRATED, BUT THERE IS SIGNIFICANT CROP IN 20 OF JAPAN'S 47 PREFECTURES. NINE PREFECTURES WHICH PRODUCE MOST (OVER 150,000 TONS ANNUALLY) ALONE SEND 91 LOWER HOUSE MEMBERS TO DIET, NEARLY 18 PERCENT OF TOTAL CHAMBER. THERE ARE NEARLY 200 MEMBERS OF DIET MEMBERS' FRUIT GROWERS PROMOTION LEAGUE. ADDITIONAL THOUSANDS OF VOTERS ARE INVOLVED IN SELLING FARM SUPPLIES TO PRODUCERS, IN HANDLING, TRANSPORTING, DISTRIBUTING AND SELLING BEEF AND MIKAN. BEEF AND MIKAN PRODUCERS ALSO ENJOY FULL SUPPORT OF POWERFUL ALL JAPAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES (ZENNO), WHICH, WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION, CLAIMS TO REPRESENT NEARLY ALL JAPANESE HOUSEHOLDS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE.

4. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES DIET MEMBERS ELECTED WITH ZENNO SUPPORT MAY NOT BE SO MUCH CONCERNED THAT LDP SEATS WILL BE

LOST TO OPPOSITION, AS THEY MAY FEAR WITHHOLDING OF ZENNO FUNDS VITAL TO THEIR RE-ELECTION OR SHIFT OF ZENNO SUPPORT TO MORE FORTHCOMING CONSERVATIVES. IN ADDITION, ZENNO REPRESENTATIVES, BECAUSE THEY COME FROM MORE STABLE RURAL DISTRICTS, ENJOY GREATER SENIORITY -- AND INFLUENCE -- IN LDP AND DIET THAN THEIR URBAN COUNTER-APRPTS. MOREOVER, AS IN MANY COUNTRIES, RURAL INTERESTS ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN TODAY'S DIET. JAPAN'S URBAN AND SUBURBAN POPULATION HAS RAPIDLY EXPANDED IN POWT-WAR YEARS, BUT ONLY A SYMBOLIC FEW DIET SEATS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO COMPENSATE. IN EXTREME CASE, NEARLY TWICE AS MANY VOTES ARE NECESSARY TO WIN IN ONE TOKYO SUBURBAN DISTRICT AS IN LEAST POPULOUS RURAL DISTRICT.

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PAGE 04 TOKYO 19880 01 OF 02 281052Z

5. CITRUS AND BEEF PRODUCERS CAN ALSO TAKE COMFORT IN SOME PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS CONSERVATIVES OF ALL STRIPES TEND TO SHARE: THAT THE NATION'S AGRICULTURE IS ESSENTIAL PART OF JAPANESE HERITAGE AND MUST BE PRESERVED; THAT TRADITIONAL JAPANESE VALUES, A CONSERVATIVE STOCK-IN-TRADE, ARE BETTER EXEMPLIFIED IN RURAL AREAS THAN IN ANY OTHER PART OF CONTEMPORARY JAPAN; AND THAT GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURAL CROP, HOWEVER MODEST, WHICH PROVIDES A COMMUNITY WITH REASON TO EXIST.

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 19880 02 OF 02 281101Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AGRE-00

CEA-01 COME-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03

LAB-04 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05 SS-15 STR-05 ITC-01

TRSE-00 PRS-01 SP-02 SOE-02 OMB-01 DOE-11 DOEE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3914

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 19880

BRUSSELS FOR USEC

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6. OVER THE YEARS, GOJ AND LDP HAS MADE ITS SHARE OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY MISTAKES, AND IT NOW HAS SERIOUS CREDIBILITY PROBLEM WITH FARMERS. IN ATTEMPT TO REDUCE RICE SURPLUS, FOR EXAMPLE, MAF ENCOURAGED FARMERS TO GROW CHERRIES AND MIKANS. NOW CHERRIES ARE SCHEDULED FOR SEASONAL LIBERALIZATION NEXT YEAR AND MIKANS COULD, FARMERS FEAR, BE NEXT. MORE-OVER, ARGUMENT, HOWEVER FALLACIOUS, IS HEARD THAT EARLIER CITRUS LIBERALIZATION DESTROYED NASCENT LEMON AND NATSU MIKAN (CHINESE CITRON) "INDUSTRIES". THERE IS FINALLY A MURKY, UNSAVORY SIDE TO BEEF DISTRIBUTION, INVOLVING JAPAN'S MINISCULE BUT POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL OUTCASTS POPULATION (BURAKUMIN) AND GANGSTERS, WHICH NO ONE WANTS TO DISCUSS.

7. COULD LDP LOSE ITS THIN DIET MAJORITIES -- FOUR SEATS IN LOWER HOUSE AND ONE SEAT IN UPPER HOUSE -- THROUGH CONCESSIONS ON BEEF AND CITRUS IMPORTS? NO ONE CAN SAY FOR SURE. IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 19880 02 OF 02 281101Z

JAPAN'S 3-5 SEAT DISTRICTS, WHERE NORMALLY MORE THAN ONE CANDIDATE COMPETES FOR EACH SEAT AND CONSERVATIVES COMPETE AMONG THEMSELVES, ANY SINGLE EXPLANATION TENDS TO BE BOTH PLAUSIBLE AND DEBATABLE. ANALYSIS IN ABSTRACT IS OF LITTLE HELP BECAUSE OF PECULIARITIES OF SYSTEM AND LOCAL AND PERSONALITY FACTORS WHICH DIFFER SHARPLY FROM DISTRICT TO DISTRICT. UPSHOT IS THAT A FAILED CANDIDATE OR PARTY CAN, WITHIN LIMITS, SIMPLY ATTRIBUTE ITS SETBACK TO FACTORS OF ITS CHOOSING WITHOUT FEAR OF PERSUASIVE CONTRADICTION. THUSE, EVEN IF IT WERE NOT SO, CONSERVATIVES COULD CLAIM DEFEAT WAS DUE TO AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS, ALTHOUGH THEY THEMSELVES HAD AGREED TO THEM AND HAD CHOSEN TIMING OF (LOWER HOUSE) ELECTION.

8. GIVEN CURRENT ELECTION SYSTEM, CAN CONSERVATIVES PLAY OFF CONSUMER INTERESTS AGAINST THOSE OF PRODUCERS, AT LEAST WITH ANY CERTAINTY AS TO RESULTS. WHILE OUR PROBINGS INDICATE THERE HAS PROBABLY BEEN NO LDP EFFORT CLOSELY TO GAME PLAY AGRICULTURAL-IMPORT FACTOR IN AN ELECTION, IN MANY URBAN/SUBURBAN DISTRICTS, WHERE CONSUMERS ARE CONCENTRATED, LDP WOULD HAVE TO NEARLY DOUBLE ITS VOTE TO PICK UP A SEAT. IN OTHERS, WHERE CONSERVATIVES LOST BY ONLY A FEW THOUSAND VOTES LAST TIME OUT, THEY MIGHT PICK UP SEATS, POSSIBLY FROM CONSUMER-ORIENTED MIDDLE-ROAD PARTIES. IN RURAL DISTRICTS WHERE CONSERVATIVES RUN AGAINST ONE

ANOTHER, A SHIFT OF A FEW THOUSAND VOTES FREQUENTLY MEANS A CONSERVATIVE LOSS TO SOCIALIST OPPONENT. MOREOVER LABOR UNION MEMBERS, WHICH HAVE SPEARHEADED CONSUMER INTERESTS IN US FOR EXAMPLE, TRADITIONALLY VOTE FOR ONE OF JAPAN'S TWO SOCIALIST PARTIES.

9. PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE OBJECTIVE FACTS, HOWEVER, ARE POLITICIANS' PERCEPTIONS. FROM TOP TO BOTTOM CONSERVATIVES HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES REPEATEDLY TO BE KEENLY  
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PAGE 03 TOKYO 19880 02 OF 02 281101Z

SENSITIVE TO AGRICULTURAL IMPORT ISSUE. MANY HAVE STRESSED THAT LIBERALIZATION OF BEEF AND CITRUS IMPORTS WOULD IMMEDIATELY THREATEN LIVELIHOOD OF JAPANESE PRODUCERS. THEY ARE ALSO QUICK TO POINT OUT TO ANYONE WITHIN EARSHOT THAT BULK OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY IS BEHOLDEN TO RURAL VOTERS AND THAT GENERAL ELECTION IS STRONG POSSIBILITY IN 1978. RECENT KYODO OPINION POLL WHICH SHOWED SIGNIFICANT FALLOFF IN RURAL SUPPORT FOR LDP WORRIES MANY; REPRESENTATIVES OF DISTRICTS INVOLVED ARE RECEIVING EXTRAORDINARY NUMBERS OF PROTEST GROUPS AND TELEGRAMS; AND ALL JAPAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES HAS TURNED HEAT ON INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS AND LDP LEADERSHIP. NOT SURPRISINGLY, DEBATE ON LIBERALIZATION ISSUE CONTINUES TO CAUSE FUROR WITHIN LDP COUNCILS. ONE HOKKAIDO SOCIALIST RECENTLY EXPRESSED TO EMBOFF HIS ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FOR OUR LIBERALIZATION DEMANDS, SAYING THEY WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO DEFEAT LDP IN HOKKAIDO. MOST LDP POLITICIANS ARE ACTING AS THEY BELIEVE HIM.  
MANSFIELD

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## Message Attributes

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